



Submission FOB178

First Peoples (Tasmania) Aboriginal Corporation

From: [REDACTED]
To: [FedRedistribution - TAS](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Submission regarding renaming Franklin to Tongerlongeter
Date: Monday, 20 July 2026 7:42:51 AM
Attachments: [Submission in Support of the Proposed Renaming of the Federal Electorate of Franklin to Tongerlongeter.pdf](#)

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Good Morning,

Please find attached our submission from First Peoples (Tasmania) Aboriginal Corporation regarding the naming of the Federal electorate of Franklin to Tongerlongeter.

We endorse the proposed name and proposed spelling.

Regards,
P.G. Rowe
Director
First Peoples (Tasmania) Aboriginal Corporation

Submission in Support of the Proposed Renaming of the Federal Electorate of Franklin to Tongerlongeter

We write in support of the Australian Electoral Commission's proposal to rename the federal electorate of Franklin as Tongerlongeter.

Tongerlongeter (c.1790–1837) was a leader of the Oyster Bay Nation who emerged as one of the most significant Aboriginal leaders in Tasmania during the period of British colonisation. As described in the Australian Dictionary of Biography by Nicholas Clements, he became the overall leader of the Oyster Bay war parties and, together with allied Big River people, led the most organised and sustained Aboriginal resistance to colonial expansion in Tasmania. Even after his forced removal to Wybalenna on Flinders Island, he continued to provide leadership, represent his people in negotiations with the colonial authorities, and advocate for their welfare until his death in 1837.

Importantly, Tongerlongeter's Country encompassed much of south-east Tasmania, including a substantial part of the area contained within the newly configured electorate. The proposed name therefore has a direct historical and geographical connection with the electorate, recognising a leader whose life and leadership were intrinsically linked to the region the electorate represents.

The Australian Electoral Commission has noted that the reconfigured electorate differs significantly from the historic boundaries of Franklin and that there are strong reasons to consider an alternative name. In selecting Tongerlongeter, the Commission has recognised a Tasmanian Aboriginal leader whose historical significance is now well established through contemporary scholarship and whose contribution to Tasmania's history has increasingly been acknowledged by historians and the broader community.

The proposed name also reflects a broader understanding of Tasmania's history by recognising an Aboriginal leader whose courage, leadership and commitment to defending his people have become more widely understood through careful historical research. As Henry Reynolds and Nicholas Clements have observed, Tongerlongeter's leadership during the Black War was without parallel in Australian frontier history, while Nicholas Clements' Australian Dictionary of Biography entry demonstrates that his leadership continued long after the conflict, as he sought to protect and advocate for his people during exile on Flinders Island.

For these reasons, I respectfully support the Australian Electoral Commission's proposal to rename the electorate Tongerlongeter. The proposed name appropriately honours one of Tasmania's most significant Aboriginal leaders, has a clear historical and geographical connection to the electorate itself, and recognises a figure whose contribution to Tasmania's history is now firmly established in contemporary historical scholarship.

Proposed Spelling of Tongerlongeter

Tongerlongeter is the spelling adopted by the Australian Electoral Commission, apparently following the usage of historians Henry Reynolds and Nicholas Clements. Historical sources contain numerous variants, including Tongerlongter (used by Plomley, Ryan and others) and Tongelongeter (used in some earlier works by Cassandra Pybus). Such variation is typical of nineteenth-century European recordings of Tasmanian Aboriginal names and should not be taken to imply different individuals.

Ryan and Plomley remain enormously important scholars of Tasmanian Aboriginal history. However, later work by Reynolds and Clements involved revisiting original archival material and adopting Tongerlongeter as the preferred modern spelling. Significantly, Professor Cassandra Pybus, who previously used Tongelongeter, has also recently adopted the spelling Tongerlongeter in a published opinion article. This suggests there is an emerging scholarly consensus around that spelling.

Over the past decade, it has been a recurring feature of public debate that the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre has opposed a number of government proposals relating to Aboriginal affairs where it has not been centrally involved in developing those proposals. Its criticism of the proposed spelling of Tongerlongeter and the consultation process appears consistent with that broader pattern.

The Commission is not being asked to determine the only historically correct spelling—because no such certainty exists. Rather, it is being asked to adopt a single, appropriate modern spelling for official purposes. In our view, Tongerlongeter is supported by respected contemporary scholarship, accurately honours one of Tasmania's most significant Aboriginal leaders, and provides a sound and defensible basis for the proposed renaming of the electorate. I therefore strongly support the Commission's proposal.

The existence of multiple historical spellings is itself a feature of the historical record and should not, of itself, be regarded as a reason to reject a spelling that is supported by respected contemporary scholarship.